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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NDJAMENA 000624

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SUBJECT: CHAD-SUDAN: "SUCCESSFUL" CHAD-SUDAN TALKS IN
KHARTOUM, DEC 24-25, CHADIANS REPORT

REF: NDJAMENA 617

Classified By: AMB LOUIS J. NIGRO, JR. FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

¶1. (C) The Chadians consider that FORMIN Faki's visit to Khartoum December 24-25 was "very positive and successful" in advancing the bilateral normalization process and the end of their "proxy war," Chad's U.S. Ambassador Bechir told Ambassador Nigro December 26. The apparently very frank discussions between the Chadians and Sudan President Bashir and his senior advisors seem to have achieved clarity on the need to end the "proxy war" once and for all and to have outlined next steps in the normalization process between the two feuding neighbors. Bechir said that Deby was President Deby and the GOC were definitely willing to sacrifice their relationship with JEM in order to achieve "true normalization" of relations with Sudan, including the ending of the Chad rebellion based in Sudan.

¶2. (C) The two sides agreed that within 15 days a Sudanese military/security delegation would come to NDjamena to discuss the modalities of implementing the 2006 Protocol. Fifteen days after that, the first "mixed border control groups" of security and intelligence officers would be operational. The GOC agreed to go to Doha to continue to lend its weight to Darfur negotiations. Bechir said that the Chadian delegation were convinced that President Bachir was indeed "serious" about normalizing relations at the expense of his Chad rebel clients, but that convincing President Deby of Sudanese good faith was not yet a given. FORMIN Faki was scheduled to brief Deby December 26 or 27, Bechir said.

¶3. (C) The quiet, persistent bilateral track inaugurated last summer between Chad and Sudan continues to produce results, building on the changed correlation of forces in the "proxy war" since 2008 and on the two government's changed strategic priorities based on an evolving geopolitical situation and on political developments within both Chad and Sudan. We have analyzed that President Deby would trade his relationship with Khalil Ibrahim for assured security from Chad rebels based in Darfur. If President Bashir and the Sudanese can deliver on such "assured security," true normalization of

Chad-Sudan relations may be at hand, to the detriment of armed rebel groups, including JEM in Chad and the rump Chad rebellion in Sudan. We will try to see Faki after he briefs Deby on this visit and its results: Senior USG encouragement to Deby to "stay the bilateral course" might be worth considering at some point.
END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

XMAS DIPLOMACY: CHAD
DEL TO KHARTOUM

¶4. (C) The Chadians consider that FORMIN Faki's visit to Khartoum December 24-25 was "very positive and successful" in advancing the bilateral normalization process and the end of their "proxy war," Chad's U.S. Ambassador Bechir told Ambassador Nigro December 26. The Chadian delegation, which was led by FORMIN Faki and included Bechir, other MFA experts, and the governors of the four Chad regions bordering Darfur, met with Sudan President Bashir and his senior advisors, including Dr. Ghazi and Intelligence Chief Atta.

¶5. (C) Bechir said that Faki's message to Khartoum included acknowledgment that Sudan had fulfilled its commitment to "canton" most (but not all) of the Chad rebels it supports in Sudan away from the border; discussions on "mechanisms of verification and monitoring" of the border; renewed Chadian commitment to normalization of relations; and a strong commitment to "resolve the JEM issue."

¶6. (C) President Bashir told the Chadians that the GOS

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wanted to enter a new phase in the bilateral relationship. The first phase of friendship and cooperation (1990-2005) was flowed by a phase of opposition and war (2005-present), in which Bashir said that the GOS sought regime change in NDjamena through the victory of its Chad rebel clients over Deby's forces and Deby's overthrow. Bashir said that he knew that Deby had supported JEM's May 2008 attempt to do the same to him, and defied the Chadians to prove him wrong. But the two countries could now enter a new phase of friendship and cooperation, because he judged that both Khartoum and NDjamena needed their resources, especially financial resources, for other more important goals.

JEM ON THEIR MINDS

¶7. (C) President Bashir said he had taken a "firm decision" to "neutralize and liquidate" the Chadian rebellion on Sudanese soil. President Bachir's demands included that the GOC "stop mediating" with the JEM and simply end all Chadian aid to JEM: The GOS could take care of the rest of the JEM problem. The Chadians and Sudanese agreed to move forward on "mechanisms to control and monitor" their frontier to eliminate threats from rebels in either direction, along the lines of the 2006 Bilateral Protocol, which called for mixed Chadian and Sudanese border patrolling and establishment of ten border control posts. Both sides also agreed to end the "propaganda war" of official and officious public attacks on each other.

¶8. (C) Ambassador Bechir said that President Deby and the GOC were definitely willing to sacrifice their relationship with JEM to normalization of relations with Sudan, including the ending of the Chad rebellion based in Sudan. Bechir repeated that breaking with JEM was not without risks to Deby and the GOC, including the threat of intra-Zaghawa "war" (see Reftel). Bechir said that the Chadian delegation were convinced that President Bashir was indeed "serious" about normalizing relations at the expense of his Chad rebel clients, but that convincing President Deby of Sudanese good faith was not yet a given, because of all the bad blood that

had run between them the past five years. FORMIN Faki was scheduled to brief Deby December 26 or 27, Bechir said.

NEXT STEPS

¶9. (C) The two sides agreed that within 15 days a Sudanese military/security delegation would come to NDjamena to discuss the modalities of implementing the 2006 Protocol. Fifteen days after that, the first "mixed border control groups" of security and intelligence officers would be operational. The GOC agreed to go to Doha to continue to lend its weight to Darfur negotiations.

COMMENT

¶10. (C) The quiet, persistent bilateral track inaugurated last summer between Chad and Sudan continues to produce results, building on the changed correlation of forces in the "proxy war" since 2008 and on the two government's changed strategic priorities based on an evolving geopolitical situation and on political developments within both Chad and Sudan. We have analyzed that President Deby would trade his relationship with Khalil Ibrahim for assured security from Chad rebels based in Darfur. If President Bashir and the Sudanese can deliver on such "assured security," true normalization of Chad-Sudan relations may be at hand, to the detriment of armed rebel groups, including JEM in Chad and the rump Chad rebellion in Sudan. We will try to see Faki after he briefs Deby on this visit and its results: Senior USG encouragement to Deby to "stay the bilateral course" might be worth considering at some point.

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¶11. (U) Minimize considered.
NIGRO